A CALIFORNIAN ABROAD.

By Thomas Fitch

[Copyright 1904.]

THE TROSSACHS.

From Edinburgh to Callender—fifty-two miles, we were whirled in one hour and twenty minutes, passing on our right Stirling Castle, which stands on the edge of a steep high rock overhanging the Frith of Forth, and Stirling plain. At Callander we left the cars, and were soon in the midst of the scenes so vividly depicted by the magician of the North,

"For this is Coilantogle Ford
And thou must keep thee with thy sword."

I quoted the foregoing lines with fervor, and looked about me for appreciation. There were fifteen of us beside the driver, sitting bolt upright in a coverless, backless, comfortless wagon. We were gazing upon the spot designated by Walter Scott as the scene of the combat between Fitz James and Roderick Dhu. A more unappreciative set of wretches than the twelve British tourists with whom it was our lot to journey that morning, never gathered together anywhere. After my quotation there was an awkward silence. The British tourists breathed hard and looked wild. My wife gazed at me with tender pity in her eye. A glass-eyed man outreached his arm, and pointing to a small cascade above the ford, remarked:

"There appears to be a dam there, and yet I see no mill or other attempt to utilize the water power."

"In other words," said I, "there is a fine dam by a mill site, but not a mill by a dam site."

It was a daring plagiarism, I admit, a standard Nevada joke originated by a Nevada editor, but it seemed appropriate and I launched it.

The twelve British tourists looked sorry.

"Perhaps," continued I, "the dam was left there by Roderick Dhu as some slight expression of his disgust at the result of the fight between Mr. F. James and himself."

Nobody smiled, nobody saw the point, and all turned solemnly to the guide books, to see if by chance any account of the dam might be found there.

We came in sight of a beautiful little sheet of water—"Loch Vennachar," and skirted its shore for five miles and watched the shadows thrown upon its silver breast by lofty Benledi, towering above the mists on our right. Then we passed through Gartchenzie Wood, "the wood of lamentations," once the residence of a water kelpie who was a student of Matthus, and attempted to keep down population by drowning little children.

At the west end of Loch Vennachar we reached the spot where the chief of Clan Alpine astonished Fitz James with a dress parade.

"Instant through copse and heath arose
Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles gray their lances start
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of brown gives life
To plaided warrior armed for strife."

And so past silver Archary, and under the shadow of Benvennue and Ben An we reach the pass of the Trossachs "Bristled Territory." This is a wild glen and terminates at the foot of Lock Katrine where a tiny steamer is in waiting. We wind in and out, past sloping banks, and wooded islands, and tumbling waters, and rugged glens, all walled in and frowned upon by lofty mountains, and blanketed by mists. Here is Ellen's Isle where Fitz James and the Lady of the Lake interviewed each other. Here is the Goblin's cave where the aforesaid Ellen raised her "angel hymn," and here, at the western end of the lake the practical jostles the ideal in the shape of an aqueduct, by which the water of Lock Katrine is carried thirty four miles to Glasgow.

From Stronalachar Pass we proceed again by coach five miles to Inversnaid at the head of Loch Lomond. Close to the pier at Inversnaid is a pretty cascade, the scene of Wordsworth's poem of the Highland Girl. Nice business Mr. Wordsworth was in, writing poetry to a Highland girl, and cavorting about on a pleasure trip, while his lawful spouse was left behind with a young infant at Grasmere.

At Inversnaid we embarked on the steamer for Ballock Pier. Loch Lomond is twenty-four miles long and seven miles wide, and no sheet of water in Europe—Como not excepted—is more picturesque or interesting. Here is where the celebrated chivalric cattle thief Rob Roy, was accustomed to retire after raiding the lowlands, and drink usquebagh, and dance the strapshey, and place his foot upon his native heath and all that sort of thing.

We pass the hundred isles (there are thirty as a matter of fact), and skirting the shore of Inch Murrin, the largest island—a mile and a half in length by a half a mile wide—used as a deer park by the Duke of Montrose, we reach Balloch Pier and disembarking enter a railroad car, and in less time than an hour are in Glasgow.

"I wish to know," said Frank Osbaldistone, "whether you can direct me the nearest way to a town in your country of Scotland called Glasgow?"

"Town ca'd Glasgow!" echoed Andrew Fairservice, "Glasgow's a ceety, man."

And a bustling solid city it is, with its half million of earnest, active, canny, useful people. They spin cotton and flax, they weave wool, they print calicoes. No looms of France throw finer silks, nor shuttles of Kidderminster more gorgeous carpets. Newcastle excels them not in the manufacture of glass and pottery, and Birmingham bows before their achievements in the matter of iron and engineering works. They brew their own beer, and distil their own dyes. They tan leather enough to shoe a kingdom, and make paper enough to wrap a continent. Besides all this, they have a practical monopoly of the ruling industry of the commercial world—the building of iron steamers.

The Clyde, "the broad and brimming Clyde," as Sir Walter Scott calls it—though in fact it is not much broader than the Chicago river, and does not brim at all—runs through Glasgow, and is spanned by five broad and beautiful bridges of gray granite and iron. The Broomielaw bridge is the widest in Europe and the busiest, and the view from its summit is the most inspiriting to an American, because it reminds him of his home. The great bridge over the Arno at Florence spans keelless waters. The Rialto at Venice looks down only upon gondolas with an occasional barge. The Pont Neuf at Paris echoes to the daily tread of a hundred thousand people, but the Seine bears neither ship nor steamer upon its swift, murky current. Even the great London bridge crosses a water course comparatively unused, but the Clyde is crowded with shrieking steamers and tall masted ships.

There are men still living in Glasgow who in their boyhood waded on foot through the Clyde where now five thousand ton steamers float. During the last half century quite eight millions of dollars have been expended in dredging and embanking the river, and the expenditure has made Glasgow the second city of the British kingdom, and the busiest shipping port of Europe. The improvement of the Clyde was not made without opposition. During the last half century the work was stopped twice, once for fear that the price of provisions at Dumbarton might thereby be increased, and again lest the cost of butter at Tron might be enhanced.

Glasgow is built of gray Aberdeen granite. I saw no structure of brick or wood in the city. Buchanan street, with its glittering shops, and its thronged sidewalks, is very like Broadway in New York.

Of all the cities of Europe, Glasgow has grown rich out of America. Virginia tobacco was the foundation of its fortunes. Before the Revolutionary war twenty-six tobacco ships made regular passages between the Clyde and the James, and of the ninety thousand hogsheads of tobacco imported into Great Britain annually prior to 1774, Glasgow secured forty-nine thousand. And when the tobacco trade fell into decay, the chief among the courtiers of King Cotton was the canny chiel of the Clyde. And when cotton was discrowned Glasgow furnished, first the ironclads with which to drive American commerce from the seas, and next the iron keels with which to supplant it. Many of the iron steamers now plying between Europe and America were built on the Clyde. The English people were chagrined at the result of the Geneva conference, and their growling at being compelled to pay fifteen millions was neither brief nor suppressed but if the sum were ten times as great it would fail to compensate us for the result of the depredating of the Alabama, or equal the amount of the indirect gains her existence brought to Great Britain.

There is a cathedral in Glasgow, a Presbyterian cathedral; it used to be a Catholic church seven hundred years ago, but the thrifty Scotchmen found it cheaper to reform the edifice than to build another. How many Virgin Marys were reconstructed unto proper Presbyterian angels, how many saints were transformed into Israelitish prophets I cannot say, but neither crucifix nor shrine now offends the covenanter's eye. And the beautiful stained glass windows are all orthodox to the last degree. The great bell of the cathedral bears the following inscription:

"In the year of grace 1594, Marcus Knox, a merchant in Glasgow, zealous for the interest of the reformed religion, caused me to be fabricated in Holland for the use of his fellow citizens of Glasgow, and placed me with solemnity in the tower of their cathedral. My function was announced by the impress on my bosom (Me audito venias doctrinam sanctam at discas) and I was taught to proclaim the hours of unheeded time. One hundred and ninety-five years had I sounded these awful warnings, when I was broken by the hands of inconsiderate and unskillful men. In the year 1790 I was cast into the furnace refounded at London, and returned to my sacred vocation. Reader, thou also shalt know Resurrection; may it be to eternal life!"

The garrulous and self-glorious old creature. They have a Necropolis at Glasgow. To call it a burial ground, or a cemetery, or by the old sweet, simple Saxon phrase "God's Acre," would not sufficiently express the snobbishness of mortuary exclusiveness.

I wonder what opinion the Caucasian theologist of the thirtieth century will entertain respecting the religion of his ancestors? If he visit one of our burial places he will find marble figures of nymphs and Angels, he will see crucifixes and Jupiters, Neptunes and Saint Sebastians, Cecials and Junos, Mary Magdalenes and Bellonas, mixed up in mythological and theological profusion, and he will be in doubt whether Christianity existed five centuries before the birth of its author, or Pantheism survived the settlement of the western world.

It was in Glasgow that we bid farewell to Scotland and to Europe. The Anchor Line has among its fleet of slow but sure steamers two fine boats. We embarked on one of these one summer morning, and gliding down the Clyde and across the channel lingered over night at Moville Lough Foyle and in nine days thereafter anchored off the Quarantine at Staten Island.

We bring the shield of our republicanism back to the new world, with no tarnish upon its fair face, no cleft in its perfect proportions. That there are great faults in our American social and political life it were vain to deny, but they are the faults of generous and outreaching civilization and we would not change our country for any we have seen beneath the sun.

"Do you really believe," said an English gentleman to me, "that every man is the equal of every other?"

"No," rejoined I, "but I believe with Abraham Lincoln, that every man should have the right to be the equal of every other man if he can."

And this one feature of America—equality of opportunity—distinguishes it from the countries of the old world. No wave of popular liberty that ever swept over any part of Europe, has been sufficiently powerful to wash away the ruts which have been deepening and hardening for centuries.

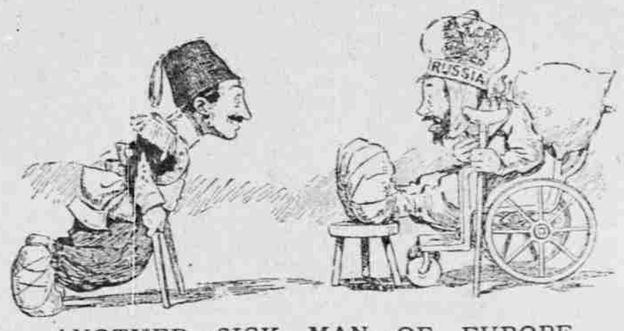
The republic of France differs in no wise essentially from the empire of France. United Italy offers no greater opportunities to the Tuscan or Neapolitan peasant to outgrow his birthmarks than the Italy of Bomba and Charles Albert. Republican Switzerland has its social and political grooves as irrevocably cut as though it owned a monarch for its executive, and if a great uprising should overthrow the Crown and Peerage of Britain, the born lackey would walk as of old behind the master's chair, the cordwainer touch his hat to the cheesemonger, and the retail linen draper bow to the importer.

We have seen something to love in all the countries, and we carry away none but pleasant memories of all peoples. The hatred, which—away down in his heart—almost every educated Englishman feels for America, fails to inspire a corresponding sentiment in your own bosom. You wonder at it, are a little amused at it, and account for it upon the basis that he has no other way to occupy his time. As for yourself, you have something else to think of. Ireland with her primrose blossoms and her luscious verdure completely captured our affections, and if our own land were blotted from existence, and we were required to be born again, and could select the spot, we should choose Erin, not less for her surpassing physical beauty than for her sympathetic, quick-witted, great-hearted, thriftless, glorious people. I join in proclaiming the motto of Phoenix—

Erin go unum
E Pluribus bragh.

We shall never look at a map of Italy again without a vision of trees draped with vines, and white-faced castles festooned with roses, and faces wherein the pomp of conquest, and the gloom of cynicism, and the langour of the sybarite are strangely blended. We shall never meet a Frenchman again without—Ah, Paris!

The author has endeavored to present the scenes and the people he has encountered, as they appeared to him. Books of travel are too numerous and of too varied a character for him to hope that he has kept out of beaten paths. Humboldt and Bayard Thayer and Mark Twain, have so cultivated the fields of science, philosophy, rhetoric and humor that little is left to be said.



ANOTHER SICK MAN OF EUROPE.

—From Life.

SLEEP.

When to soft Sleep we give ourselves away
And in a dream as in a fairy bark
Drift on and on through the enchanted dark
To purple daybreak, little thought we pay
To that sweet, bitter world we know by day.
We are clean quit of it, as is a lark
So high in heaven no human eye may mark
The thin swift pinion cleaving through the gray.

Till we awake ill fate can do no ill,
The resting heart shall not take up again
The heavy load that yet must make it bleed;
For this brief space the loud world's voice is still,
No faintest echo of it brings us pain,
How will it be when we shall sleep indeed?

—By Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

Sure enough: "Of course, I don't want to criticise, but I don't think it was altogether right for David to say 'all men are liars.'" "Well, at any rate, it was safer than to pick out one man and say it to him."—Philadelphia Press.

"You say he has a visionary and impractical nature?" "Yes," answered the girl who is employed in the post-office; "he is one of those people who write 'Rush' on an envelope instead of putting on a special delivery stamp."—Washington Star.